

**Lavender Scare**

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Lavender Scare

Scene 1

1957. New York City. A Room. A desk, a chair, a door stage left. JACK and THOMAS, both in suits, both quite natty, stand facing one another. JACK holds a file that he is looking at. There are other files – many files – on the desk.

JACK  
(Reading from the file)

Tom. Tom Baxter.

THOMAS  
(Correcting him)

Thomas.

JACK  
Of course. But actually, that's not what it says. It says Tom.

THOMAS  
My boss calls me Tom. At the Bureau. I don't like it.

JACK  
It's better than Tommy.

THOMAS  
What?

JACK  
Tom's better than Tommy.

THOMAS  
Why would he call me Tommy?

JACK  
I don't know.

THOMAS  
Be seated?

JACK  
What?

THOMAS  
Should I be seated?

JACK  
Oh, sit, stand, it's up to you.

THOMAS  
Are you going to stand?

JACK  
There's only one chair.

THOMAS  
You could sit and I could stand.

JACK  
Are you afraid to sit?

THOMAS  
Why would I be afraid to sit?

JACK  
Afraid I might torture you.

(Pause.)

THOMAS  
Is that what you're going to do?

JACK  
God, I hope I don't have to. (Pause.) I'm joking. (Looking at file) Let's see...

THOMAS  
Did you still want me to stand?

JACK  
Oh, I think you'd better. Joking. Sit. Sit. Sit. (THOMAS doesn't sit.) So, let's see, Tommy. Joking. Tom. Thomas. Let's see, Thomas. You've been with the Bureau... Your bureau, not my bureau. (Looking at THOMAS's file) You've been with your bureau, gracious, eighteen years.

THOMAS  
Yes.

JACK  
Huh. Aeronautics. That's a weird Bureau for you, isn't it?

THOMAS  
Is it?

JACK  
You work on bombs.

THOMAS  
What Bureau would you think is right?

JACK  
I don't know. Bureau of Bombs?

THOMAS  
Bombs are dropped by planes.

JACK  
Oh, I see, that makes sense. Yes. Yes. Yes. And Bureau of Bombs is too obvious, isn't it? We like to deceive ourselves in the US government, don't we?

THOMAS  
What do you mean?

JACK  
Department of Defense instead of Department of War.

THOMAS  
FBI instead of Gestapo.

JACK  
I don't see that at all. No. Gestapo's a German word. No. No. No. That wouldn't work for us. Bureau of Fear? How about that? (Looking at file) And you're a... Oh, I don't like that word.

THOMAS  
What word is that?

JACK  
Pervert. I don't like that word at all. Hmm. Bad word. Bad word. Bad word.

THOMAS  
(Sitting)  
I kind of figured that's what this was about.

JACK  
But you don't think of yourself as a pervert. That's so judgmental.

THOMAS

I don't think of myself as anything.

JACK

Well, you don't think of yourself as normal, do you? I mean if you were that you wouldn't be here. Would you?

(THOMAS nervously hums to himself.)

JACK

Do you have sex with men in the Bureau? I mean in your Bureau, not mine.

THOMAS

There's no sex in the FBI?

JACK

Oh, God, I hope so. I'd hate to think your Bureau's more exciting than mine. Joking. Is there a lot of sex in your profession?

THOMAS

There was more during the war.

JACK

Yeah, I've heard that.

THOMAS

You weren't in the war?

JACK

Navy. There wasn't that much sex.

THOMAS

That's not what I've heard.

JACK

Not for me. You sleep with other men in your department?

THOMAS

Nope. You sleep with other men in the FBI?

JACK

I was joking. There's no sex in the FBI.

THOMAS

I find that hard to believe.

JACK

No, no, everyone's far too paranoid to touch each other. There's a cocksucker down the hall but he goes to Cuba for all that. Cuba's a great place for that. For cock.

THOMAS

Why am I here?

JACK

Evidence. You're here because of evidence. You think we just call people in on trumped up charges? This isn't Nazi Germany. Not yet. I mean, it's good to have a goal. But we're not Nazi Germany. One day maybe.

THOMAS

What's your evidence?

JACK

Oh, you don't want to hear this. It's embarrassing.

THOMAS

What's your evidence?

JACK

You had sex with Jacob Alonzo in the Army.

THOMAS

I was in the army fifteen years ago.

JACK

So you admit it?

THOMAS

That's your evidence?

JACK

You had a lot of sex in the army.

THOMAS

According to whom.

JACK

According to a lot of people.

(THOMAS hums nervously.)

JACK

Is it because you've gotten older that you've stopped having sex with men?

THOMAS

I...

JACK

Trick question. How about this? Name the last woman you had sex with.

THOMAS

Why am I here?

JACK

Ok, well... You're a criminal. We know that from the evidence. And you work on bombs. H-Bombs. That's a bad combination.

(THOMAS hums.)

JACK

Catchy tune.

THOMAS

I don't really work on bombs.

JACK

That's what it says here.

THOMAS

I do budgets.

JACK

Budgets for bombs.

THOMAS

Cost analysis.

JACK

For bombs.

THOMAS

Yes, for bombs.

JACK  
Hydrogen bombs.

THOMAS  
Yes.

(THOMAS hums.)

JACK  
(Bursts out singing the lyrics to the song THOMAS was humming)  
*SOME ENCHANTED EVENING*  
*YOU MAY SEE A STRANGER*

THOMAS  
You have a lousy voice.

JACK  
Wow, thanks. I never get to sing out loud.

THOMAS  
Really?

JACK  
Sing with me.

THOMAS  
No.

JACK  
No, no, please. I like to sing with other guys. It helps my pitch.  
*ACROSS*

JACK/THOMAS  
*A CROWDED ROOM*  
*THEN FLY TO HER ARMS*  
*AND MAKE HER YOUR OWN...*

THOMAS  
You saw *South Pacific*?

JACK  
Six times. Loved it, loved it, loved it.  
*NOW, NOW I'M ALONE*



JACK/THOMAS

*STILL DREAMING OF PARADISE.*

THOMAS

You saw Ezio Pinza?

JACK

Of course. But for me it was all about Mary Martin.

*I'M AS CORNY AS KANSAS IN AUGUST*

*BRIGHT AS THE SKY ON THE FOURTH OF JULY.*

THOMAS

You're not what I expected.

JACK

You're exactly what I expected. But then, I had a file.

THOMAS

Are there many Mary Martin fans in the FBI?

JACK

I'm not a Mary Martin fan.

THOMAS

You are.

JACK

I'm actually not. I liked her in *South Pacific* but I'm not a fan. Nope.

THOMAS

Ok.

JACK

Now Judy Garland... She I like in everything. Have you seen her live, onstage?

THOMAS

No.

JACK

Oh, you must! She's divine! Exquisite! Oh, my God, I have to tell you this. I saw her onstage at Carnegie Hall. She was on something. She was STONED! But it was delicious. It made it better. And she refused to sing "Rainbow." Refused. And we all booed. And then she caved in and sang it. It was beautiful. And we made it happen. My friend Jeremy, not his real name, my friend Jeremy, he said, "We whined like a bunch of little bitches and she obeyed."

THOMAS

What's Jeremy do?

JACK

Well, he doesn't suck cock if that's what you're asking.

THOMAS

At least he doesn't suck yours.

JACK

(Offended)

Hey, Jeremy's a friend of mine. He'd never suck someone else's cock. He knows how much that would hurt me.

THOMAS

I'm confused.

JACK

Jeremy and I have been friends for years. If he was going to suck dick, which he doesn't, but if he was going to suck dick, he would definitely suck mine, only mine.

THOMAS

Are you...

JACK

Me? No... (He laughs.) Oh, Lordsy, you think I'm like you? No, that's funny. I just joke about it. Joking about it is still ok. So long as it remains a joke. (Showing him) Wedding ring. Married. Woman.

THOMAS

Am I under arrest?

JACK

No. No, that would ruin everything. We want you to keep working.

THOMAS

Why?

JACK

Well, why don't you think about that. Why don't you really think about that. Why don't you do a thought experiment.

THOMAS

A thought experiment?

JACK

Do you like *Where's Charley?*  
*MY DARLING, MY DARLING*  
*I WANTED TO CALL YOU MY DARLING*

JACK

Come on, sing with me. Come on....

JACK/THOMAS

*FOR MANY AND MANY A DAY.*  
*MY DARLING, MY DARLING*  
*I WANTED TO CALL YOU MY DARLING...*

JACK

Oh, my God, when I saw that show, it killed me, it absolutely killed me. The drag scenes. Ray Bolger, he sings, he dances, he wears dresses, I think he's the perfect human. Did you like it?

THOMAS

Very much.

JACK

Do you wear dresses?

THOMAS

No. Do you?

JACK

No. But there's nothing wrong with wearing dresses. My Lord, my boss wears dresses. It's perfectly ok to put on a dress now and then.

THOMAS

Does your boss suck cock?

(Pause.)

JACK

If he does he doesn't get caught.

THOMAS

Neither do I.

JACK

And yet you're here.

THOMAS

I'm still trying to figure that one out.

JACK

How did you get involved in all this?

THOMAS

All what?

JACK

Oh, no, not that... This, this, A-Bomb stuff.

(Silence.)

JACK

You might as well tell me.

THOMAS

How do I know you're not the enemy?

JACK

Well, I am the enemy. Your enemy. But I'm not a Russian.

THOMAS

How do I know you're not a Russian?

JACK

Oh, I see, you don't know what I already know so... Oh, yeah, clever. (Shoving THOMAS's file across table) Here's your dossier. Look it over. We're not the Russians. Did you see Helen Traubel in *The Ring Cycle*?

THOMAS

I don't like opera much. (THOMAS looks at his file.)

JACK

Oh, my God, opera's like musical comedy on steroids, it's insane. How about Callas in *Tosca*? (Singing) "Vissi d'arte. Da la molte. Ney la ba da ba ba bonte bonte." I'm just making that up. I don't really know the lyrics.

THOMAS

You know a lot about me.

JACK

Of course, we do. How did you get into A-Bombs?

THOMAS

I'm a finance man. I do numbers. I don't do the bombs, I do the numbers behind the bombs.

JACK

Yeah, but why A-Bombs?

THOMAS

I could work late. General Groves, he needed people who could work late.

JACK

Why could you work late?

THOMAS

No wife, no kids.

JACK

Oh, yeah, clever.

THOMAS

I suppose that's all over now.

JACK

Oh, no, we're sending you back to work. As I said. We want you to keep working.

THOMAS

Why?

JACK

So, you go back to work and let us know if anyone else talks to you. We'd especially like to know if anyone else talks to you.

THOMAS

What should I say to them if they do?

JACK

Anything you want. I mean, don't tell them anything. Tell them nothing but say it anyway you want.

THOMAS

I would never tell them anything important.

JACK

That's the problem. We can't be sure about that.

(Lights out.)

Scene 2

(In the dark we hear the Overture to *Guys and Dolls*. Lights up on THOMAS and JACK, same positions.)

JACK

*WHY IT'S*

*GOOD OLD RELIABLE NATHAN, NATHAN, NATHAN, NATHAN DETROIT.*

Sing with me.

*IF YOU'RE LOOKIN' FOR ACTION*

Sing with me.

*IF YOU'RE*

JACK/THOMAS

*LOOKIN' FOR ACTION, HE'LL FURNISH THE SPOT.*

*EVEN WHEN THE HEAT IT ON IT'S NEVER TOO HOT*

*NOT FOR GOOD OLD RELIABLE NATHAN, NATHAN, NATHAN DETROIT.*

JACK

God, I loved that show. The energy, the dancing, my God I didn't know men could dance like that.

THOMAS

You saw *South Pacific*.

JACK

Oh, my God. You're right. The male chorus in that. All those topless men. That was better! I was in the Navy. It was just like that - sweaty men, beaches, heat, sand. Jesus, people think I like wearing a suit. I think I was happiest in dungarees and nothing else.

THOMAS

I was happiest in nothing else.

JACK

You had a busy week.

THOMAS

A new budget. Yes.

JACK

The Neuter Bomb. Sounds expensive.

THOMAS

Neutron.

JACK

What?

THOMAS

Neutron Bomb.

JACK

No... No, wait. (Looks at file) My God, you're right. The Neutron Bomb. Oh, Lordsy, Lordsy, Lordsy, this whole week I've been thinking it was the Neuter Bomb. (He laughs and laughs.) My God, I figured out what it did and how it worked and everything. I did a thought experiment and figured it all out. It would neuter all Russians. With radiation. It would neuter them. I thought, "Clever. We're clever."

THOMAS

That kind of is what it does. Will do. Or won't, not if I have anything to say about it.

JACK

No. No, you don't think it can be built. We can't afford it. Right?

THOMAS

How do you know that?

JACK

It says it right here. Your summary. Your analysis summary.

THOMAS

I'm impressed.

JACK

We both had busy weeks.

THOMAS

Yes, I had a busy week. I worked a whole week. As a pervert. And I saved the government a lot money on a bomb it couldn't build.

JACK

Four hundred million dollars, it says.

THOMAS

Yes, I saved the government half a billion dollars. As a pervert.

JACK

Good point.

THOMAS

So let me ask you something.

JACK

What's that?

THOMAS

Why am I here?

JACK

Ok, what happens when the Russians find out you're that way? They come to you, they say, "We'll turn you in if you don't spy for us. We'll tell the government you're a big old fag."

THOMAS

How would they know that?

JACK

I knew it. It was easy.

THOMAS

I don't go out. I don't sleep around.

JACK

You live with a man.

THOMAS

Lots of men do.

JACK

For twelve years.

THOMAS

Lots of men do.

JACK

He goes out. He sleeps around. Whoops. I wasn't going to say that.

THOMAS

He doesn't.

JACK

He does.

THOMAS

Not in a long time.

JACK

He actually dooooooes.

THOMAS

That's his business.



JACK  
That doesn't bug you? That he sucks cock?

THOMAS  
It's none of my business.

JACK  
But it's mine. Because he's a criminal.

THOMAS  
Then prosecute him. Drag him in here.

JACK  
He doesn't work for the government. You do.

THOMAS  
What do you want me to do?

JACK  
Let's do a thought experiment. Scientists like those, don't they?

THOMAS  
I'm not a scientist.

JACK  
Well, I'm not a Russian but let's pretend. What would a Russian want you to do if he got his hands on you?

THOMAS  
I don't want to play this game.

JACK  
Tough. What would a Russian want you to do?

THOMAS  
Give away secrets.

JACK  
And.

THOMAS  
Give away secrets. I don't know.

JACK  
And.

(Pause.)

THOMAS

Name names.

JACK

Very good. Very good. Name names.

THOMAS

I don't know anyone else who's queer in government.

JACK

That's horseshit.

THOMAS

I don't.

JACK

Name one name.

THOMAS

There isn't one.

JACK

Malarkey. Name one.

THOMAS

No.

JACK

No means you won't which means you can. Name him.

THOMAS

No.

JACK

Name him.

THOMAS

No.

JACK

Name one and I'll let you off. You can go free.

Till you want another.

THOMAS

Ok. But you can go free today.

JACK

Till you call me in tomorrow.

THOMAS

You can go home and hang yourself in peace.

JACK

You're disgusting.

THOMAS

You take it up the butt. You're disgusting.

JACK

You know the lyrics to every song on Broadway.

THOMAS

What's that mean?

JACK

I bet you've had it up the butt.

THOMAS

Ho ho. Good comeback.

JACK

And Judy's next concert date. You buy your tickets?

THOMAS

Boy oh boy, you're on a roll.

JACK

You go with your wife to these shows?

THOMAS

No, I told you, I take Jason, not his real name.

JACK

Last week it was Jeremy, not his real name.

THOMAS

JACK

It's still not his real name.

THOMAS

Who is Jeremy?

JACK

My college roommate.

THOMAS

I see. Your roommate.

JACK

One difference. I'm not under arrest for compromising US security.

THOMAS

I'm not either. I'm just locked in a room with you.

JACK

You want an arrest? That what you want?

THOMAS

I want an attorney.

JACK

"I want an attorney." Is that something you saw on TV? *Dragnet*? Name a name.

THOMAS

No.

JACK

Name a name.

THOMAS

No.

JACK

Name a name and you're cooperating with us.

THOMAS

No.

JACK

Name a name.

THOMAS

No.

JACK  
(Suddenly menacing)

Name a name!

THOMAS

Joe Eliot Saunders!

JACK

Joe...

THOMAS  
*I'VE NEVER BEEN IN LOVE BEFORE, I THOUGHT MY HEART WAS SAFE  
I THOUGHT I KNEW THE SCORE.  
BUT THIS IS WINE*

JACK

Did you see the movie?

THOMAS

Of course.

JACK

Brando sang that other song, not this one, that other one.

THOMAS/JACK  
*YOUR EYES ARE THE EYES OF A WOMAN IN LOVE.*

JACK

I liked that song.

THOMAS

Not as good as "I've Never Been in Love."

JACK

Different. Just different.

THOMAS

I don't think he could sing "I've Never Been in Love."

JACK

I never thought of that. Still, he had a wonderful quality in that movie. You know he can be a mean bastard, but he never shows it. He can hammer the shit out of you, but he never shows it. His menace is all beneath the surface.

(Pause.)

THOMAS

I missed Sam Levene in that movie. His gentleness, his schlemielness. Sinatra just seemed like a thug pretending to be nice.

JACK

But they gave him that great new song.

*ADELAIDE, ADELAIDE  
EVER LOVING ADELAIDE*

JACK/THOMAS

*IS TAKIN' A CHANCE ON ME*

JACK

Joe Eliot Saunders. Your boss.

THOMAS

Was my boss.

JACK

You hate him.

THOMAS

Nevertheless.

JACK

He called you out on some bad projections and prevented your promotion.

THOMAS

Nevertheless.

JACK

He called you incompetent.

THOMAS

And yet.

JACK

He's married.

Plus. THOMAS

Father of three. JACK

And he.... THOMAS

Rotary Club Member. JACK

And a faggot. THOMAS

I don't buy it. JACK

You asked for a name. He's the biggest one I know. THOMAS

Nope. You just want revenge. JACK

Maybe. But he's queer. Oh, yes he is. THOMAS

Is that why he turned you in, to cover his tracks? JACK

He didn't. THOMAS

Oh, yes, he did. Came to us. We never even approached him. JACK

I don't believe that. Not even about him. THOMAS

Why not? You're doing that right now. JACK

He's a better person than I am. THOMAS

JACK

That's interesting.

THOMAS

He was right to demote me. I was out of my depth in rocket analysis. I know that now. AND he's queer.

JACK

We'll check him out.

THOMAS

Are you queer?

JACK

I don't know.

THOMAS

Are you?

JACK

Maybe.

THOMAS

Tell me.

JACK

I can imagine doing it with a man.

THOMAS

So you want to?

JACK

Oh, I do. Very much. I saw some pictures once, in the Navy. Men with erections. I couldn't believe it. They actually stood there and let their picture be taken. I couldn't believe the confidence of someone like that. The strength. The pride. I do admire that. It was breathtaking.

THOMAS

Did you want to suck it?

JACK

Oh, yes. And everything else. Actually, confession, true story, this is so hot, they weren't pictures. They were actual guys. Used to show their erections. In the barracks. I could not believe it. My mouth would hang open.



THOMAS

Did you ever put anything in it?

JACK

Others did. I used to watch. It was amazing. Absolutely unbelievable.

THOMAS

Better than *Guys and Dolls*?

JACK

Much.

THOMAS

Better than Judy?

JACK

Well. But I never did anything. I just couldn't imagine myself actually doing it. Nope. I was raised Methodist. Not me at all.

THOMAS

Well that's really sad.

JACK

Is it? I'm here and you're there. (As Connie Francis) *WHO'S SORRY NOW?*

THOMAS

I've had it all. I haven't admired things, stood in awe of them, I've participated. Been a part of it. Connected.

JACK

And you've ruined your life.

THOMAS

No. You've ruined it.

JACK

I'm just doing my job.

THOMAS

I've heard that before.

JACK

Don't compare me to the Gestapo. We don't gas people. We enforce the law.

THOMAS

Ok. Anyway being queer's more than just having sex.

JACK

What does... What?

THOMAS

You're obsessed with musicals.

JACK

I'm not obsessed with musicals. I'm not.

THOMAS

You are.

JACK

I'm not.

THOMAS

Excuse me but you are.

JACK

I like ballet and opera and fashion, I'm obsessed with a lot of things. Not just musicals.

THOMAS

Is this some kind of... never mind.

JACK

Oh, is that what you're talking about? Queer culture? I like these things therefore I'm queer? Oh, dear. Is that what you're talking about. Well, well, well, now who's conducting the witch hunt?

THOMAS

I think this is all laughable.

JACK

Of course you do. Because you're in trouble.

THOMAS

No, your whole concept of what it means to be queer is laughable. You've boiled it all down to sex. If you have sex with a man you're queer. It's more than that – it's an outlook, it's a perspective, it's a way of being, not just a way of having sex.

JACK

Fascinating.

THOMAS

Loving musicals is queer, that's a queer thing.

JACK

Are you saying that every man who likes musicals is queer?

THOMAS

I said LOVING musicals, not liking them, LOVING them. You LOVE musicals.

JACK

What's wrong with that?

THOMAS

Do you think most men love musicals as much as they love sports? Are you a sports fan?

JACK

God, no, they bore me to tears.

THOMAS

You don't like baseball?

(JACK makes barfing response.)

THOMAS

Football?

(More barfing.)

THOMAS

Well...

JACK

Are you saying I'm queer?

THOMAS

I don't say anybody's anything, that's for them to decide.

JACK

I'm not queer.

THOMAS

Ok, you're not. Not if you say you're not.

JACK

But you are.

THOMAS

Because I say I am.

JACK

Oh... Oh, now we're getting somewhere.

THOMAS

But not because I have queer sex but because I identify as a queer man. I think like a queer man.

JACK

Think like...

THOMAS

I LOVE musicals.

JACK

Yes, but you couldn't be blackmailed because you can sing "Goodnight, My Someone." No Russian's going to come up to you and say, "You loved *The Music Man*. Tell us about the neuter bomb."

THOMAS

Neutron.

JACK

Neuter sounds better.

THOMAS

Neutron bomb sounds better. It's alliterative.

JACK

You're right.

THOMAS

Of course I'm right, I went to Harvard.

JACK

The Ivy League's very queer.

THOMAS

You're right. So I'm not just queer because I have sex with men.

JACK

But you do, that's important.

THOMAS

But I don't. So it's not. It's been three years since I slept with a man.

JACK

Goodness, goodness me.

THOMAS

Yes.

JACK

Three years?

THOMAS

Yep.

JACK

That must be awful. I'm so sorry.

THOMAS

It's all right.

JACK

What happened? You must feel terrible. Why don't you weigh four hundred pounds? Are you an alcoholic?

THOMAS

I'm fine.

JACK

I feel awful for you.

THOMAS

It's no big deal.

JACK

I'd weigh four hundred pounds if I didn't get my joint licked regularly.

THOMAS

It was a choice.

JACK

A bad one.

THOMAS

Maybe.

But why? JACK

t's personal. THOMAS

It's probably in your file. You might as well tell me. JACK

I'm sorry I brought it up. THOMAS

You might just convince me. JACK

Bob, my... THOMAS

Husband? JACK

I'd never call him that. THOMAS

It does sound weird. JACK

I just don't think of him that way. Husband? THOMAS

Anyway. JACK

Bob, my... THOMAS

Wife? JACK

Wife? THOMAS

Spouse? JACK

THOMAS  
Bob, my partner.

JACK  
Partner. Boy, that sounds better.

THOMAS  
Bob just stopped. He just... stopped. I don't know why?

JACK  
Did you try asking him?

THOMAS  
About four hundred times.

JACK  
Ok. I know about that.

THOMAS  
You do?

JACK  
Of course I do. I'm married.

THOMAS  
So...

JACK  
Did you try other people? I mean if he wasn't going to.

THOMAS  
Yes. I got tired of the drama. It was too much drama picking up men. And I never really got picked up.

JACK  
Why not? You're attractive.

THOMAS  
Thank you.

JACK  
If I did men, I'd do you.

THOMAS  
Thank you. But you're just being kind.

JACK

You're right. I am. There's something about you.

THOMAS

Something about my manner?

JACK

Yeah, you're kind of grand. You look a little too fastidious for sex.

THOMAS

Thank you.

JACK

Sex is a mess. It's... sticky. There's just a lot of sticky, oozy, liquidy stuff. You don't look like you'd be so into the slippery, wet, gooey, icky side of sex.

THOMAS

Thanks.

JACK

Oh, sorry.

THOMAS

No, you're probably right. Anyway, this, all this, the way I am, probably happened or got exaggerated after I decided to stop.

JACK

I see.

THOMAS

As a defense mechanism.

JACK

Makes sense.

THOMAS

Also...

JACK

What?

THOMAS

I was afraid.



JACK

Of what?

THOMAS

Of something like this happening.

JACK

Oh, oh, yes... Well, that's the irony, isn't it? You aren't any more, in your eyes, but you are, in mine. Forever. I suppose that's what's bugging all those rich Hollywood types. They haven't been Commies since they got rich and now they're having to eat shit and name names for something they did back when they were poor. But there has to be a reward for abstinence. Think of all the penises waved in my face during the war and I never touched one of them. Now I can live free of fear.

THOMAS

The last time I did it I paid for it.

JACK

Nothing wrong with that.

THOMAS

No, I was ok with that. He just... He just wanted to meet again, that's what got me.

JACK

Oh.

THOMAS

At first I thought he liked me.

JACK

Oh, oh, yes.

THOMAS

But then I realized it's just business.

JACK

Well he DID like you. He liked your business. Yes, sex is very American that way. It's all about client development. In all senses of the word. Wow. I never thought of it like that. You can be queer without having queer sex. Identity beyond boners. It's kind of touching.

THOMAS

I can't believe I told you all that.

JACK

I'm good at my job.

THOMAS  
But I wanted to tell you.

JACK  
I'm very good at my job.

THOMAS  
It was a relief.

JACK  
I think of myself as a laxative.

THOMAS  
I never get to talk about any of this.

JACK  
You haven't seen a therapist?

THOMAS  
They only want to cure you.

JACK  
Oh, yes.

THOMAS  
They have some social common denominator and they try to reduce you to it.

JACK  
I suppose that's why they're called shrinks.

THOMAS  
Whereas you, bizarrely, you just accept me for what I am.

JACK  
Well that's the great thing about fascism. No matter how hard you try to escape your identity the fascist won't allow it. Like all those Jews who tried to pass for Catholics. A good old-fashioned Nazi doesn't fall for that. I suppose it's like accounting. The facts don't lie. So, moving forward. Have you thought about why we might be sending you back to work? Have you done your thought experiment.

THOMAS  
Name names.

JACK  
Well, you're already doing that.

THOMAS

But if you locked me up the others might flee, take off.

JACK

Very good. You should work for us. And?

THOMAS

The Russians.

JACK

Yes. The Russians.

THOMAS

You're hoping they'll come to me.

JACK

Yesiree! Good!

THOMAS

And then you can use me, use me to feed them garbage.

JACK

Because they'd eat it. They would eat it. Because they're pigs.

THOMAS

I thought you liked fascists.

JACK

Not their kind of fascists.

THOMAS

You make distinctions?

JACK

They're Communist Fascists. That's just dishonest.

THOMAS

They would never come to me.

JACK

No, you're not available. You're too fastidious.

THOMAS

Yes.

JACK  
So you have to make yourself available.

THOMAS  
How do I do that?

JACK  
You just told me.

THOMAS  
I did.

JACK  
Pick up men. Hang out in bars. Start shopping again.

THOMAS  
I told you I didn't like that.

JACK  
But now you'd be doing it for your country.

THOMAS  
It's grotesque.

JACK  
Imagine that. What every American wants. Sent out by his country to have deviant sex. Actually given a per diem for perversion.

(Hands him an envelope.)

JACK  
We even thought of giving you rubles but that's a little smug, don't you think? Stand up. Vests are like armor. They say, "Don't touch me." We want you touchable.

(He removes THOMAS's jacket, removes his vest, puts jacket back on him, loosens his tie, unbuttons his tie button.)

JACK  
You almost look louche.

THOMAS  
Before, when you shouted, you wouldn't have hit me.

JACK  
No, I'm a pussy cat. Meow.

(Lights. In the dark we hear the Overture to *My Fair Lady*. Lights. THOMAS and JACK in the same places.)

Scene 3

JACK

Oh, my God. This weekend, this weekend  
*I COULD HAVE DANCED ALL NIGHT*  
*I COULD HAVE DANCED ALL NIGHT*  
*AND STILL HAVE PRAYED FOR MORE.*  
Sing with me.  
*I COULD HAVE SPREAD MY WINGS*  
Come on.

JACK/THOMAS

*AND DONE A THOUSAND THINGS*  
*I'VE NEVER DONE BEFORE*

JACK

Have you seen it? Have you seen it?

THOMAS

Yes.

JACK

Wasn't it divine?

THOMAS

I liked it, yes.

JACK

Liked it? I thought it was divine. Rex Harrison is the perfect human. Perfect.

THOMAS

But for you it was all about Julie Andrews.

JACK

Oh my God, how did you guess? In that white ball gown with the flowers and the pearls and the thing, the thing on her hair.

THOMAS

Tiara?

JACK

I LOVE THAT WORD! I just wanted to hear you say it. Say it again.

THOMAS

Tiara.

JACK

Do you wear tiaras? Ever? You can tell me.

THOMAS

I told you, I don't put on...

JACK

Yes, yes, yes, but you could wear a tiara. You could be naked and wear a tiara.

THOMAS

No, I don't.

JACK

My boss wears a tiara. But it's too small. He's a full-figured girl. He needs a bigger tiara.

(Pause.)

JACK

I have to say I was impressed. You went to that foul bar in the Village. We saw you.

THOMAS

It was terrible.

JACK

Not a very nice place.

THOMAS

I mean all those nice queer men.

JACK

There were a lot of them. Nice?

THOMAS

And they were drunk.

JACK

Yeah.

THOMAS

Leering at each other.

JACK

It was sort of a gross parody of the normal world.

THOMAS  
How do you mean?

JACK  
Normal bars are like that. Drunk men and women. Leering.

THOMAS  
It made me so depressed.

JACK  
You weren't very good at it.

THOMAS  
There was no dignity.

JACK  
Someone approached you.

THOMAS  
No Russians.

JACK  
Someone.

THOMAS  
Yes.

JACK  
But you didn't go home with him.

THOMAS  
No. We talked for a while. Half hour.

JACK  
You seemed very intent on what he was saying.

THOMAS  
He was hard to understand. His speech was horribly slurred.

JACK  
Bar talk.

THOMAS  
He was telling me how lonely he was.



JACK

So it wasn't just about sex?

THOMAS

No. He wanted someone to hold him. To cuddle him.

JACK

That's sweet.

THOMAS

I realized, after a half hour, that I knew him. From the Army. It had been a while. He looked completely different. Ruined.

JACK

Booze will do that.

THOMAS

Persecution did it. Being treated like a criminal.

JACK

The FBI doesn't sell the liquor.

THOMAS

I can't do it. I can't troll. It's horrifying.

JACK

Yes. I had to stop too.

THOMAS

It occurred to me, this week, I was thinking about all this and it occurred to me...

JACK

What?

THOMAS

That maybe this, all this doesn't have to do with my being... that way.

JACK

Ok.

THOMAS

I don't think any of this has anything to do with sex, that's just an excuse.

THOMAS

Then what's it got to do with?

THOMAS  
You think I like Russia.

JACK  
Oh... Oh, you're referring to your trip.

THOMAS  
Yes.

JACK  
But that was for the government. You went to Moscow as part of the Science Forum.

THOMAS  
Yes.

JACK  
We have no problem with that. That was an effort to cool tensions.

THOMAS  
Yes, but I said, I wrote in my report...

JACK  
I know what you said.

THOMAS  
I said, "The Russians are not the enemy. They're a wonderful people."

JACK  
We have no problem with that.

THOMAS  
Oh.

JACK  
They're not the enemy.

THOMAS  
They're not?

JACK  
No. The Russian way of life is the enemy. The Communist System is the enemy. The Russians are... folks are folks. The government, that's the problem.

THOMAS

Oh.

JACK

We like that you went to Russia and liked the Russians. We like that. It's wrong to think that way but it's all right. It's a little off, but not in a big way.

THOMAS

Oh.

JACK

It makes you human.

THOMAS

Forgive me but that's perverse. I mean, I'm accused of being perverted but your thinking is twisted, it's perverse.

JACK

But that's my job. I'm paid to think that way. To slip you up. Your thoughts are perverted not because you're perverse but because you're wrong. They are wrong thoughts.

THOMAS

But they're not. Male-male desire has a deep historical-

JACK

Oh, please, just please. Plato? Socrates? I'm so tired of that. We don't live in Ancient Greece. This is the United States. We've spent a hundred and seventy-five years deciding we don't like homosexuality. Let's please accord US history more respect than the history of Classical Greece. Our democracy has lasted longer than theirs, we must be doing something right. Can we please show some fucking respect?

THOMAS

I spoke with an attorney.

JACK

Attorneys are interesting people to speak to. Good for you!

THOMAS

We had a long talk.

JACK

What did you talk about?

THOMAS

I want you to arrest me.

JACK

Oh, that game.

THOMAS

What game?

JACK

I arrest you then you demand a jury trial and then the judge throws it out because my evidence is scanty. I know that game. Hide in plain sight.

THOMAS

I want you to arrest me.

JACK

Nope. We stay out of the courts. The courts are too... how do I put it? Fair. You're an employee. We like to keep this a personnel issue.

THOMAS

I have rights as an employee.

JACK

And we have rights as an employer. You see, you want to have it both ways and that's horseshit. You want to work for the government but you don't support the government.

THOMAS

How do I not support the government?

JACK

The government doesn't support you. You're a criminal. The government says you can't do what you do and work for the government. And yet you work for the government. That's nonsense. Work for someone else. There are plenty of jobs in this country.

THOMAS

But that's my job. That's the job I grew into.

JACK

You think I'm queer. You think I have those impulses. Ok. Great. But I haven't acted on them because to act on them is to betray my job, my employer, my country.

THOMAS

So this is punishment, it's jealousy. I get to do something you do not so I'm in trouble.

JACK

Yeah, ok, how is that not fair?

THOMAS  
It's vicious, it's childish.

JACK  
But it's fair.

THOMAS  
Do you have affairs with women?

JACK  
Sure. Why not? It's not illegal.

THOMAS  
I'm sure it is. Somehow. By some stretch of the law.

JACK  
Ok. But nobody's enforcing it. Nobody cares about that.

THOMAS  
Your wife probably does.

JACK  
Yeah, but that's between her and me.

THOMAS  
You could be compromised. They could threaten to tell your wife.

JACK  
If they did, I'd tell her first. Then I'd tell them to fuck off.

THOMAS  
Aren't you afraid she'd leave you?

JACK  
No. She can't afford to. I pay for everything.

THOMAS  
So she's your prisoner.

JACK  
Hey, she has a good life. That's how it works. Morality can only stretch so far in a generation. My father had to masturbate when he wanted to get off so I'm doing better than him. But you're trying to push things too far. At least for right now.

THOMAS

But I'm not. No Russian has tried to approach me.

JACK

Yeah, but we have. This is so bad we can use it against you to get you to name names. That's just stupid, to put yourself in that position.

THOMAS

I didn't put myself there, you did.

JACK

You set yourself up to be put there.

THOMAS

Do you try to recruit Russian homosexuals?

JACK

There are none.

THOMAS

There are. There's queer graffiti on the walls of Moscow bathrooms. I've seen it.

JACK

That doesn't mean the men who wrote it are queer. It just means they like to get off with men. That doesn't make them queer. You guys... you're trying to make a whole new identity. You said it yourself, it's not just about sex, it's about culture, outlook, perspective.

THOMAS

Ok, what's wrong with that?

JACK

You've ruined it for people like me who'd just want to get off and not be identified as queer.

THOMAS

But what's so wrong with an alternative perspective on life?

JACK

You work for the government, man! The government doesn't want alternative perspectives, it wants its perspective. Jesus, have some fucking gratitude, your government salary pays for your life. Can't you show some gratitude by being loyal?

THOMAS

How am I disloyal?

JACK

Because you disapprove. You disapprove of your government. Suppose you had to drop a bomb on Moscow? Would you do it?

THOMAS

Why would I have to do that?

JACK

Because they were about to drop a bomb on us. Would you do it?

THOMAS

But why would anyone ask me to do that? It's ridiculous.

JACK

Thought experiment, would you? Would you destroy all those Moscow queers you've come to love?

THOMAS

You said they weren't queer.

JACK

But you think they are.

THOMAS

And who said I loved them?

JACK

How could you not? You think they're like you. Would you destroy them?

THOMAS

But I would never be asked to do that.

JACK

You are asked to do that. Every day.

THOMAS

No, I'm not.

JACK

You are. You draw up budgets. You determine whether or not we as a financial body can afford to build bombs.

THOMAS

But that has nothing to do with dropping them.

JACK

Doesn't it? You wrote, your analysis determines we couldn't afford to develop a neutron bomb. That was your analysis.

THOMAS

Because we can't.

JACK

Can't we?

THOMAS

No, it's a ridiculous ambition.

JACK

Because you said it.

THOMAS

No, because we can't. We don't have the financial resources. We just don't.

JACK

We built the atom bomb, we built the hydrogen bomb.

THOMAS

This is way beyond those devices in terms of buildability.

JACK

But you see, how do we know that? How do we know that's true? We have only your word to go on. And you don't subscribe to this government's view of life. You like the Russians. They're a wonderful people.

THOMAS

But you said that's ok. You think it's fine.

JACK

But you don't think it is. You think it's wrong! You've discovered queers in Moscow. We can't know if your analysis is true or queer biased. We can't know. You see?

THOMAS

Ok, yes, actually I can see that. I can see your problem.

JACK

And we're supposed to go on paying you for this biased information?

THOMAS

No, I can see the logic of your position.



JACK

Ok, so, what's the problem?

THOMAS

So why don't you just fire me?

JACK

Oh, we would but...

THOMAS

But?

JACK

But you owe us for all the years of lying before we caught you. What are we supposed to do with all those years we've already paid for?

THOMAS

But I wasn't lying.

JACK

But we have only your word to go on! We only have you saying you weren't lying. And you hate us. You hate everything about us. This guy you work with, this accountant, Delbart Rayes... Delbart Rayes, where do people get names like that... Delbart Reyes says we could afford it, he did a cost analysis, same as you, and he said it is well within our means.

THOMAS

He was trying to get a promotion.

JACK

But you see, that's what we like, people who are motivated by wanting to get ahead as opposed to people who hate us.

THOMAS

But I don't hate you.

JACK

But we don't know that. Especially when you say, "The Russians are a wonderful people. They're not the enemy."

THOMAS

Ok, so you gave him a promotion and you didn't give me one. So you've exacted your revenge.

JACK

But we didn't build the bomb. We trusted you, not him. We trusted you.

THOMAS

You didn't have to.

JACK

But we did. We did have to.

THOMAS

Why?

JACK

BECAUSE YOU WENT TO HARVARD AND HE WENT TO CITY COLLEGE! Use your fucking brain. Who would you believe?

THOMAS

But you knew I was gay.

JACK

But we took that as a sign of greater intelligence! Look at it this way: who's smarter? The guy who fucks what he wants or the guy who fucks his wife? Who's smarter?

THOMAS

But you say I'm not smart because I'm here.

JACK

Only because we got sick of you getting away with it and decided to persecute you! Look, eventually the stupid people, like me, get fed up with being treated like we're stupid and fight back.

THOMAS

But you are stupid, you've said as much.

JACK

But we don't like being stupid! Who does? Jesus. Why is it such a mystery to smart people that their intelligence pisses everyone off?

THOMAS

But obviously we're not smarter if you can persecute us.

JACK

That makes no sense. The smart have always been persecuted by the dumb. Jesus, read your fucking history. You think Stalin was smart?

THOMAS

Where are we going with this?

JACK

I need some names. Something. I need an act of fealty. A show of faith.

THOMAS

But I have no faith, I don't believe in you. You argue very well and I've developed a certain respect for your frank logic, but I hate you.

JACK

But you see, that's not the point, read fucking *1984*. I need you to name a name, a significant name. Not so we can get that person but so you know you're worthless, you're weak, that we have the power.

THOMAS

So if I name names you'd do nothing?

JACK

Of course we will. We'll pick them up, we'll arrest them, we'll beat them, we have to so that you see that your actions have consequences. You need to see that to save your own neck someone else had to be hurt. You need to see that.

THOMAS

Jesus.

JACK

I know, it's awful but that's how it works.

THOMAS

You haven't beaten me.

JACK

Oh, we will. That's all part of it.

THOMAS

But not if I name names.

JACK

I'm not making any promises.

THOMAS

Why don't you just beat me to get the names?

JACK

Be patient! There's a list, a wait, everyone's in such a hurry. And waiting to get beaten is part of the terror.

THOMAS

I've given you a name.

JACK

We had that name.

THOMAS

I can't do that.

JACK

You can't but you will.

THOMAS

I have to have some loyalty.

JACK

Why? You hate your government, you no longer sleep with your partner, you don't speak to your parents. When have you ever done loyalty? Why do intelligent people always make such a mess of their lives?

(Pause.)

THOMAS

It made me feel sorry for Bob. What you told me. What he must go through to find affection.

JACK

Do you withhold affection?

THOMAS

Yes.

JACK

Why?

THOMAS

Why?

JACK

Who am I going to tell?

(THOMAS laughs.)

THOMAS

I blame him. I decided, at some point, that if I at least lived alone I might pass. I might be able to get ahead. I might actually get one of those promotions. I kind of figured "my colleagues know" and I felt like that was holding me back.

JACK

And he wouldn't let you go.

THOMAS

No, I couldn't leave. I couldn't. I was too afraid. Of being alone. So I blamed him. I stayed but I blamed him.

JACK

Life is so fucked up. Anyway, you don't want to be normal. It's overrated. Kids. Not worth it.

THOMAS

Kids have given you grief?

JACK

No. I wish they had. We had a kid. Oh, my God, I'm telling you this. Anyway... A little kid. Jack Jr. Adorable. She loved me so much she named him after me. He walked on his toes, the balls of his feet. Oh, yeah, he was a walker, but something was wrong with his feet. We never figured out what. But he loved to walk, and run, on the balls of his feet. Like he was falling. He would run like he was falling. But he never did. He never fell. Just sort of zipped forward, on the balls of his feet. I'd say, "Run, Jack. Come on little Jack, run." And I laughed and laughed, watching his running. On the little balls of his feet. Yeah, he died. Cancer. Little bald head. They tried everything on him. But he didn't last. Five years old. Lie. Four and eight months. And then she was finished. She never said she was finished but she was doing something, taking something, maybe having operations, I don't know. But nothing ever came out of her again. She said to me once, she finally said to me, "Why would I ever go through that again? Loving some little thing that much and having it die on me. Why would I ever run that risk again?" I couldn't believe she admitted it. After years of getting away with it she finally fessed up. Well, that was it for me. I shut her out. I mean I wasn't going to leave her. That would ruin my career but... And it made perfect sense. Her position. All I had to do was understand. But I refused.

JACK

*YOUR EYES ARE THE EYES*

JACK/THOMAS

*OF A WOMAN IN LOVE.*

(Blackout.)

Scene 4

(Lights. THOMAS and JACK in the room. THOMAS hands JACK an LP, wrapped.)

THOMAS

I... I don't know what to say. I bought you this.

JACK

Thanks.

THOMAS

I just felt like buying you something.

JACK

Thank you.

THOMAS

After last time.

JACK

(Unwrapping it)

*The King and I.*

THOMAS

My favorite.

*I HAVE DREAMED THAT YOUR ARMS ARE LOVELY.*

Sing with me.

*I HAVE DREAMED WHAT A JOY YOU'LL BE*

*I HAVE DREAMED-*

JACK

I hate Rodgers and Hammerstein.

THOMAS

You...

JACK

Their stuff drives me insane.

THOMAS

But you loved *South Pacific*.

JACK

That was out of character for them. (Handing it back) You keep it.

THOMAS

Ok.

JACK

You didn't go out this week.

THOMAS

I told you, I can't do that.

JACK

You're going to have to. The Russkies aren't going to come to your office.

THOMAS

I used to do budgets for thermonuclear devices, now I'm supposed to troll bars? That's all my country wants from me.

JACK

You don't care about your country.

THOMAS

Do you know why I didn't pass on the budget for the neutron bomb?

JACK

I told you what I think.

THOMAS

Because I loved my country. I wanted to protect it.

JACK

How does that work?

THOMAS

I didn't pass on the budget because it could be built. It could. Not that it couldn't. It could. We could afford it. I wanted to stop it. Not because I was queer, not because I hate my government. I hate the bomb. The bomb's what I hate. The neutron bomb. Do you know how it works? Do you?

JACK

It's worse than the hydrogen bomb. Yeah, I get it.

THOMAS

No. It destroys people, not buildings, not property. It doesn't have a large blast, it has a small blast but it releases radiation in massive amounts, much more than the hydrogen bomb. The radiation penetrates objects and kills the people. It destroys the people but not the property. It's about protecting property and destroying people. It's despicable.

JACK  
(With some of his old flair back)

I like it. I kinda like it.

THOMAS

How could you like it?

JACK  
Well, you see, I feel awful about the people dying, awful, I do. But the buildings, the works of art, I mean I've always been a huge fan of culture and the thought of all those pretty buildings and works of art being destroyed was just too much. I mean if I had to drive into town every day and there was no Chrysler Building... but a bomb that protects the culture, my goodness, that's something I can get behind. I always thought the biggest problem with civilization was the people.

THOMAS

Well, this bomb's for you.

JACK  
But couldn't it be seen as... well, wait a minute... now wait a minute. I'm just doing a thought experiment. Couldn't it be used tactically to destroy an invading army but save the local people?

THOMAS

I've heard that argument.

JACK  
Yes, couldn't it be used against an invading armored division, say if the Russians crossed the West German border in thousands of tanks, couldn't it be used against those tanks to destroy the Russians inside the tanks but not the property of the Germans, our allies.

THOMAS

I've heard that argument. But all that property would be radiated, it would be poisoned with radiation so what would be its value?

JACK  
Depends on how quickly the radiation dissipates.

THOMAS  
And there's a more sinister danger. It makes us think we can fight limited nuclear war. We can use atomic weapons tactically which just makes it easier, once we've used them, to use the real ones, the hydrogen bombs, the destructive ones. And if we used the neutron bomb on their tanks, how would they respond if they didn't have a neutron bomb themselves? They'd have to use their atomic bombs to retaliate so we'd end up in full nuclear war anyway.



JACK

Unless someone gave them the neutron bomb. That was the Rosenbergs' solution. Give them the secrets. Did you ever consider that?

THOMAS

No, I did not.

JACK

Why not?

THOMAS

I'm an American.

JACK

But you're not. You break the law by being queer and you pass on false financial information to quell military development. You're a traitor. (Looks at his watch.) I've been getting some pressure. From upstairs.

(A cry is heard through the wall. Another.)

THOMAS

What's that?

JACK

You think you're the only client? I at least need some names. Something.

(Another cry.)

THOMAS

You'd never do that to me.

JACK

I don't need to. He'll be in here soon. (THOMAS starts humming.) Hey, he's hard to schedule. I got lucky. He had a cancellation.

(Another cry.)

JACK

You produce budgets, I produce reports. I need some names.

(Another cry.)

THOMAS

I don't buy it. It's just some guy making noise. To scare me.

JACK

That's actually a good idea. It would save a lot of mess. I'll suggest that at the next staff meeting.

(A loud thud.)

JACK

Name a name.

THOMAS

No.

(Another cry.)

JACK

Name one name.

THOMAS

No.

JACK

Name a name.

(Another thud.)

THOMAS

Bob. Bob Peebles.

JACK

Good. Very good. Your... what did you call him? Your partner?

THOMAS

My lover.

JACK

Ex-lover.

THOMAS

No, my lover, even if we don't make love.

JACK

You realize that as a teacher you've ruined his life.

THOMAS

Yes.

JACK  
But you can rationalize it because he cheats on you.

THOMAS  
No. I just want this to stop.

JACK  
You want it to stop?

THOMAS  
I'm afraid.

JACK  
Ok. Good. Fear's good. Fear's a good thing. Name another.

THOMAS  
No.

JACK  
Name another.

THOMAS  
You said-

JACK  
Fuck what I said. Name another.

THOMAS  
Lyle Thompson.

JACK  
(Looking up the name in a file)  
Oh, oh, ok.

THOMAS  
Lyle Thompson.

JACK  
You mentored him. Talked to him about his problem. You helped him.

THOMAS  
Yes.

JACK  
You're his protector.

THOMAS  
Yes.

JACK  
Don't name him. He looks up to you, admires you.

THOMAS  
Lyle Thompson.

JACK  
Oh, ok, wow. Name another.

THOMAS  
Oh, God.

JACK  
Name another.

THOMAS  
Delbart Rayes.

JACK  
Nooooo.

THOMAS  
He came to me. He confessed to me. A lot of them did. Because they needed solace. Comfort. Because they were afraid.

JACK  
And you told them it was all right.

THOMAS  
Yes.

JACK  
You told them it would be all right.

THOMAS  
Yes.

JACK  
But it's not. Because now you're naming them.

THOMAS  
Yes.

JACK  
Out of fear.

THOMAS  
Yes.

JACK  
To protect your own hide.

THOMAS  
Yes.

JACK  
Excellent. Great. Name some more.

THOMAS  
George Mason. Henry Shropshire. Daniel McQuade. Iffey Wainscott. James Howard. David Bliss. But you know all these people. You know about them, right?

JACK  
We had no idea. This is great. The motherlode. Thank you.

(Another thud and cry. JACK walks to the wall and knocks on it casually.)

JACK  
(To wall)  
Thank you. (He smiles at THOMAS.) You're right. About me. I needed someone to identify with. I couldn't gush at home. I certainly couldn't gush with Jeremy, he's so paranoid. So I found you. You can't imagine how much I look forward to these sessions. Sometimes I didn't think I would make it to the next one. Then I realized I could call them whenever I want. So I did. They've been a great comfort to me.

THOMAS  
But you'll bring those people in, you'll nab them.

JACK  
No. I just wanted to bring you in. To talk, to dish, to sing.

THOMAS  
And those names?

JACK  
Oh. I'll hang onto them. I wouldn't want you to stop coming.

THOMAS

Oh.

JACK

I'll dangle them over your head. You see, I need a friend too. Can't have friends in my Bureau. So I went to another one.

THOMAS

And you have all these names.

JACK

Well, that's good too. You see, you are a traitor. Traitor to your country, traitor to your friends, traitor to your identity. I mean that kind of is your identity now: traitor.

THOMAS

Can I leave?

JACK

Don't feel bad. They're just names. I do this for a living. I'm an expert at it. It's just meant to remind you.

THOMAS

Of what?

JACK

Who has the power.

THOMAS

And you won't do anything to them?

JACK

I don't need to. It's enough for you to think I might and to know you are responsible if I do. That's plenty. My God, it's just like bombs. It's no different than bombs. We're both in the intimidation game. We don't have to blow things up to scare people. We're in the fear business. That's enough.

THOMAS

Bureau of Fear.

JACK

BOF.

THOMAS

Can I go?

JACK

Sure. What are you doing this weekend?

THOMAS

Nothing.

JACK

I have tickets for *Once Upon a Mattress*. Saturday night. Can I take you? I think it's going to be a huge hit. I'll give you a hint: you have to say yes. We can make an evening of it. I'll see you at the theater.

(Blackout.)

End of Play